

Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and transport References Committee Inquiry into the Citrus Industry in Australia May 2013	
Submission No. 18 Mr Michael and Ms Tanya Punturiero	Citrus Australia response
Despite all of these things, neither Citrus Australia nor their named representative to the MTF has made any attempt to consult with Mystere Orchards on these matters or to advise me that such processes were taking place.	<p>Citrus Australia has extensive consultation processes in place including website, media releases, industry notices, a national export advisory committee and regional meetings and events. Outcomes of some of these are found on the Citrus Australia website, and include:</p> <p>Listening to Riverland Growers 8 December 2012</p> <p>In late October Citrus Australia hosted 3 grower meetings in the Riverland to hear from growers about their concerns and ideas for the industry...</p> <p>Packer meetings pick up pace 18 January 2013</p> <p>Information sessions for packers and exporters will take place across the Riverina, Sunraysia and Riverland. Representatives from DAFF will be on hand to discuss the horticultural export fees and charges model...</p> <p>Citrus Australia would be pleased if Michael and Tanya Punturiero register as a citrus levy payer (no cost) on the Citrus Australia website, as it is not possible to obtain the SA grower list held by the South Australia Citrus Industry Development Board (now in administration). This would ensure direct contact from Citrus Australia.</p>
With enough irony to choke a horse Citrus Australia released a statement 5-2-13 regarding the new fees which with a slightly desperate air about it states "This is not an attempt to try and consolidate or force small business out".	<p>Citrus Australia is pleased to reproduce this statement in its entirety:</p> <p>Most citrus packers will save money as a result of the introduction of a new structure for export certification fees, attendees of a Citrus Australia packers and exporters workshop heard recently.</p>

	<p>Most major packing sheds turned out to the sessions, which were held across the key citrus growing regions of south east Australia in mid-January.</p> <p>A Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry representative provided an update on the fees and charge changes, which follow a major review of grains, meat and horticulture export certification. Packing sheds will now need to pay an increased establishment cost, but this will attract a Federal Government rebate for the first two years. And DAFF inspection hourly charges will fall just over 50 per cent.</p> <p>Citrus Australia Market Development Manager Andrew Harty says the new structure will benefit most packers. "For the bulk of the industry it will be a cost saving, and we expect sheds to pass that saving down to growers."</p> <p>To reduce the establishment cost, which may be prohibitive to smaller operations, Citrus Australia is encouraging sheds to nominate one facility in the region for certifying consignments, so that only one establishment fee is required. This is similar to the approach already used for cold sterilisation in many regions.</p> <p>"This is not an attempt to try and consolidate or force smaller businesses out, but there are options for those businesses to look for cost saving alternatives," says Andrew.</p> <p>The new Authorised Officer program is also expected to benefit packers financially. Scheduled to start electronic data collection in September, the program will allow anyone with technical expertise to undergo AO training and become defacto certifying officers. The move will provide greater flexibility to packing sheds, who currently have to wait for a DAFF inspector to visit their facilities. "The new system will give sheds a whole lot more flexibility and will offer a huge cost saving," says Andrew. 'To speed up acceptance of the AO system by protocol markets, we need AOs to be trained and successfully inspecting consignments in most of our sheds – the sooner we show the system works, the easier it will be to get approval from trading partners.'</p>
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	<p>DAFF is currently working with citrus' key export markets to ensure they understand the rigour of the new system. Training is free until June. To find out more visit:</p> <p>http://www.daff.gov.au/aqis/export/plants-plant-products/ao</p> <p>Other issues covered during the days included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Crop forecasting: Citrus Australia confirmed that the national crop forecast system will continue, despite the regional state boards being wound up in South Australia and the Riverina. The existing service provider in SA will again carry out the work in that region, and has also been appointed to survey the Riverina. In Sunraysia, the Murray Valley Citrus Board will continue to collate and share data with Citrus Australia. A national forecast, including Queensland and WA data, will be issued by Citrus Australia in late March.• Fuller's rose weevil program: Citrus Australia Market Access Manager David Daniels encouraged packers to be vigilant of the threat of Fuller's rose weevil. Orchards that plan to export to China, Korea and Thailand, must implement appropriate orchard management practices and register for crop monitor training in March.• Residue monitoring program: Packers were encouraged to ensure either they or their exporter were signed up for the residue monitoring program, specifically set up to deal with fruit destined for Japan. The program is entering its third season, with 240 tests taken last season, up from 150 in the first. Participants in the program must adhere to strict residue regulations, but have support from the government in resolving issues if Japan does reject consignments. Packers were also encouraged to consider using alternate post-harvest fungicides, which pose lower maximum residue limit risks.
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